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IN THIS ISSUE:

News Releases—

News Releases

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USDA ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF TENNESSEE BURLEY TOBACCO REFERENDUM

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21—Preliminary results of a referendum held Jan. 28-31 show that Tennessee producers of burley tobacco favor lease and transfer of burley poundage quotas across county lines within the state, according to John Stevenson, acting administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. The Farm Poundage Quota Revision Act of 1990 amended the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 to authorize USDA to conduct the referendum.

Approximately 62 percent of the burley growers participating in the referendum voted in favor of lease and transfer in these circumstances, Stevenson said. A vote above 50 percent was required for the referendum to carry. Preliminary results were as follows:

Yes	22,778
No	18,831
Total	36,909
Percent in Favor	62

As a result of the vote, lease and transfer of a burley quota from one farm to any other farm in Tennessee will be permitted, beginning with the 1991 crop. Stevenson said this restructuring of transfers of quotas will enable Tennessee growers to produce burley tobacco more efficiently. Over the past five years, Tennessee growers produced tobacco in a quantity equal to only 76 percent of their basic quotas.

Other tobacco program provisions, such as disaster lease and transfers of quotas, tobacco price support and USDA's inspection activities, are not affected by the referendum.

John Ryan (202) 447-8207

#

USDA EASES RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTS OF SEED POTATOES FROM CANADA

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced it is easing restrictions placed earlier this month on imports of seed potatoes from Canada.

The restrictions were put in place after the discovery of a potato virus originating from Prince Edward Island, Canada. This strain of the virus has never been detected in the United States.

According to James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the import restrictions can now be eased because a U.S. team has evaluated the Canadian eradication plan and the laboratory and seed certification procedures being carried out in Canada.

"Based on these evaluations and the commitment we have received from Canadian officials," Glosser said, "we feel that movement of potatoes under the new, eased restrictions can be made safely and will not present an undue risk to U.S. producers of potatoes or other susceptible crops."

The virus—known as PVY-N or the necrotic strain of potato virus Y—attacks not only potatoes, but tobacco, and may attack tomatoes, peppers and certain other crops as well. The disease can be transmitted long distances through the movement of seed potatoes.

The new import rules permit the entry of seed potatoes—other than the "Atlantic" variety—that originate in seed potato inspection districts 5 and 6 on Prince Edward Island and are accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by Agriculture Canada.

Seed potatoes originating in New Brunswick may enter the United States except for the progeny of potatoes of the Atlantic variety that originated from Prince Edward Island in 1989 or 1990 and any other potatoes grown on farms with the Atlantic variety. The potatoes also must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate that clearly dentifies each seed lot and has a declaration indicating non-contact with potatoes of the Atlantic variety.

The previous restrictions prohibited the entry of all seed potatoes from the Canadian provinces of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

Glosser said seed potatoes from other areas of Canada may continue to be imported with a certificate identifying each seed lot and a declaration that they are not the product of seed obtained from Prince Edward Island in 1989 or 1990.

Potatoes originating in these two provinces that are imported for table stock or processing must be treated with a sprout inhibitor and be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. "If the importation is for processing and the product is being shipped for that purpose to a specific destination in the United States, treatment is not required," Glosser said.

The disease has been found in seed potato lots from at least 14 farms in Prince Edward Island and three farms in New Brunswick. Testing in Canada is continuing.

Caree Lawrence (301) 436-7799

#

USDA TO IMPLEMENT NEW PROVISIONS OF THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON—America's farmers and ranchers will be given numerous incentives to tackle environmental concerns when this year's Conservation Reserve Program opens up for bids in March.

"The new program has many opportunities for producers as a result of changes in the 1990 Farm Bill," said Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter. "There are some exciting conservation ideas in addition to some expanded criteria for enrollment."

The 1985 Farm Bill authorized the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) primarily to protect highly erodible lands. Nearly 34 million acres were enrolled under the program in past sign-ups.

The 1990 Farm Bill extends the old legislation but shifts the primary focus away from erosion reduction toward new multiple environmental objectives.

The program has changed to the point that lands, with greater frequency, will not necessarily have to be eroding to be accepted into the new CRP. Other environmental concerns such as water quality have become as important as erosion.

Eligible land for the new CRP will include areas with identified water quality problems, designated conservation priority areas, public wellhead areas (municipal water sources) identified by the Environmental Protection Agency and areas where trees are to be planted. Areas designated by states as sources of water quality problems also may be eligible for participation in the CRP.

Producers who want to establish new terraces, shelterbelts, windbreaks, filterstrips, waterways, wildlife habitats or other long-lasting environmental practices may now be able to do so on eligible cropland under the CRP.

USDA will implement new procedures to increase bid competition among CRP applicants to determine acceptable offers from farmers. Bids will be evaluated on the basis of the overall environmental gain to society.

"The most notable difference to farmers will be the way USDA accepts offers and the expansion of eligible lands. Bids will be screened at the local and national levels to determine the acceptability of the requested rental payment," Yeutter said.

At the local level, county ASCS committees will review each offer to make sure the offer does not exceed local cash rental rates, based on the committee's knowledge of those rates for comparable land within the county.

At the national level, offers will receive a final screening. This assessment will use a mathematical formula based on an estimate of the potential productivity and environmental value of the land being offered.

"We want a fully competitive bid system in operation. That means offers will be very carefully reviewed, weighing costs against environmental benefits," Yeutter said.

There are other implications as well. Since enrollments over the next five years will be smaller than the last five years, USDA can be more selective to insure that enrolled land is more crucial to environmental improvement.

For example, environmentally sensitive areas in the Eastern Corn Belt, the South, Appalachia, the upper Mid-West and the Northeast will have a much better chance of being accepted than in the past.

"Producers will not have to worry about the CRP filling up on the first couple of sign-ups under the new proposal. In order to reserve 2 million acres for enrollment in 1994 and 1995 by producers who might be experiencing hardship implementing conservation plans on highly erodible land, USDA will limit sign-ups on an annual basis," Yeutter said.

Wetlands will be covered under a separate program which will use easements rather than 10-year contracts. Details for the Wetland Reserve Program will be proposed separately.

USDA plans to enroll an additional 5.5 million acres in these programs by 1995, including approximately 500,000 acres in the tenth sign-up for CRP contracts, March 4-15. In addition, a summer sign-up will be held for 1992 crops for the CRP and for wetland programs.

Under the CRP, annual rental payments of up to $50,000 per year for approved contracts may be made to eligible farm owners or operators who convert eligible cropland to approved cover, including grass, trees and wildlife cover. USDA will soon publish more details of the proposed program in the Federal Register.

Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623
Issued: Feb. 21, 1991

#

USDA SEEKS COMMENT ON PROPOSED SOYBEAN PROMOTION AND RESEARCH ORDER

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on a proposal for an ''order,'' or set of implementing regulations, to establish the promotion and research program authorized by the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act. The new law is part of the 1990 Farm Bill.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposal, furnished by the American Soybean Association, would have the program administered by a board of approximately 60 soybean producers nominated by the soybean industry and appointed by the secretary of agriculture. The procedure mirrors existing research and promotion programs for other agricultural commodities.

A mandatory assessment of 1/2 of one percent of the market value of soybeans sold in the United States would fund the program.

Haley said the proposal was the only one received in response to USDA's request for proposals appearing in the Dec. 26, 1990, Federal Register, and announced in a Dec. 28, 1990, USDA news release.

Haley also said the association proponent requested a public forum early in the comment period to discuss the proposal. USDA has granted the request, setting a meeting for 9 a.m., Wednesday, March 6, in the Jefferson Auditorium, USDA's South Building, 14th Street and

Independence Avenue, Washington, D.C. Anyone interested in the soybean program is welcome.

The proposal will appear in the Feb. 25 Federal Register. Comments, in duplicate, should be sent by April 11 to Ralph L. Tapp, chief, Marketing Programs Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, rm. 2624-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. Copies of the proposal and additional information are available at that address, telephone (202) 447-1115.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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USDA INCREASES INSPECTION FEES FOR MEAT AND POULTRY PLANTS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service today increased fees charged to federally inspected meat and poultry plants for certain inspection services, including laboratory work and overtime.

The overtime and holiday rate for federal inspection at meat and poultry plants is now $28.32 per hour, up from $27.24. The rate for voluntary inspection and certification services is now $27.72 per hour, up from $26.68. The rate for laboratory work is now $47.96 per hour, up from $46.60.

"Our yearly cost analysis has indicated a need to increase some inspection fees to reflect agency expenses more accurately," said FSIS Administrator Dr. Lester M. Crawford.

Federal law provides funding for inspection during regular working hours of meat and poultry products involved in interstate and international commerce. However, USDA is authorized to charge plants for inspection services beyond regular work schedules, for voluntary laboratory work, and for voluntary inspection and certification services.

Notice of the increases was published today in the Federal Register.

FSIS and its 9,000 employees are dedicated to ensuring that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

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UNITED STATES AND MEXICO DECLARE MEXICO FREE OF SCREWWORMS

MEXICO CITY, Feb. 25—The United States and Mexico today declared the successful eradication of screwworms from Mexico, leaving the whole country free from the costly parasite.

"The joint commission for the eradication of screwworms has come a long way in the 19 years since the program began in Mexico," said Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter at ceremonies celebrating Mexico's screwwormfree status.

Yeutter was one of the five original U.S. commissioners to the bilateral group. As the ranking U.S. member, he served as co-chairman with his Mexican counterpart for the first four joint-commission meetings held in 1973 and 1974.

Even though the screwworm is eradicated, Yeutter said, livestock producers must continue to inspect their animals, treat wounds and send in samples to ensure that a screwworm reinfestation does not occur.

The United States has invested an estimated $630 million in screwworm eradication. The annual budget in Mexico has averaged $32 million.

The absence of screwworms in the United States saves U.S. livestock producers approximately $400 million annually. The total benefits of screwworm eradication to the United States and Mexico are estimated in excess of $3 billion.

The screwworm is a parasite that feeds on the living flesh of warmblooded animals, including humans, wildlife and pets. Screwworms are the larvae or maggots of the screwworm fly, Cochliomyia hominivorax (Coquerel), which is about twice the size of the common house fly. Screwworm infestations can seriously injure, maim or kill infested animals, particularly if wounds are left untreated or become infected.

Screwworm eradication was accomplished through biological control, the key component of which is the sterile insect technique, developed by USDA scientists in the 1950s. The technique revolutionized pest management worldwide and is environmentally safe and virtually fool-proof.

Since 1976, a special production plant in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, Mexico, has produced up to 500 million sterile screwworm flies weekly. During their pupal stage, the flies are exposed to a small dose of radiation that leaves them sexually sterile but otherwise normal.

The sterile flies are then aerially released to mate with wild fly populations. No offspring result from these matings. These unsuccessful matings gradually reduce natural fly populations and the fly breeds itself out of existence.

"It has taken 19 years of diligent work on the part of Mexico and the United States to eradicate the screwworm from Mexico, and this accomplishment has not come without its share of disappointments and obstacles," Yeutter said. "But as the program expands southward into Central America, its success has been proven beyond all doubt. I am confident that the great spirit of cooperation the United States and Mexico have fostered will continue in the coming years."

Janna Evans (301) 436-7251

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USDA TO REVISE FRESH POTATO STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is revising the U.S. standards for grades of potatoes, effective March 27.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the revisions establish more specific criteria for "scoring" (i.e., rating) internal defects of potatoes, making potato grading even more exact than it is now.

Under the revised standards, "hollow heart" and certain types of internal discoloration will be objectively graded by measuring the defective area with an area gauge. "This will eliminate subjectivity when scoring these defects," said Haley.

AMS works with industry representatives to establish or revise standards for many agricultural products. The standards are used in a fee-based grading service that industries request.

Details of the revisions of the potato standards will be published in the Feb. 25 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from the Standardization Section, Fresh Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, Rm. 2056-S, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, telephone (202) 447-2185.

Carolyn Coutts (202) 447-8998

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USDA PROPOSES FEE INCREASES FOR EGG, POULTRY, RABBIT AND EGG GRADING

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing increased fees for certain grading and inspection services for eggs, poultry, rabbits and egg products.

"Increases in the salaries and fringe benefits of federal employees and federally licensed state employees providing the services justify raising the fees," said Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, which administers the grading program.

Hourly fees for voluntary, industry-requested grading would rise from $19.68 to $20.96 for resident service (work of a grader with a regular tour of duty at a plant); from $27.28 to $28.64 for non-resident service (intermittent, "as needed," grading); and from $27.36 to $29.68 for nonresident grading work on weekends and holidays.

The administrative fee for the cost of USDA supervision of voluntary grading and for other overhead expenses would rise from $.029 to $.031 per case of shell eggs and from $.00029 to $.00031 per pound of poultry in plants using the resident grading program. The minimum administrative fee for poultry and eggs per billing period would rise from $145 to $155, and the maximum fee would rise from $1,450 to $1,550. The minimum administrative fee for grading rabbits would rise from $145 to $155 per billing period.

Hourly fees for special inspection services in egg products plants als would rise. Proposed increases are from $14.72 to $16.04 for holiday inspection work and from $23.20 to $24.48 for processing appeals from inspectors' decisions.

The Egg Products Inspection Act requires that costs of services other than basic inspection during a normal 40-hour week be paid by the user. The special inspection fees were last increased in May 1990.

Grading services administered by USDA are made available on request by interested parties and paid for by the users. The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 requires user fees to be reasonable and, as nearly as possible, equal to the cost of the services. Current fees have been in effect since May 1990.

The proposed grading and inspection fee increases will be published as a proposed rule in the Feb. 25 Federal Register. Comments must be

received in the office of Janice L. Lockard, chief, Standardization Branch, Poultry Division, AMS, USDA, rm. 3944-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, on or before March 27.

Carolyn Coutts (202) 447-8998

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USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROCEDURES TO ESTABLISH SOYBEAN BOARD

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on a proposal to establish procedures for nominating soybean producers to a board to administer a national promotion and research program for soybeans.

Authority for the board rests in the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act which was signed into law as part of the 1990 Farm Bill on Nov. 28, 1990.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said that under the proposal the secretary of agriculture would appoint board members from nominees submitted by soybean producer organizations.

Any soybean producer would be eligible to be nominated. An eligible state soybean organization, i.e., one which has been approved by the secretary to nominate producers, would forward two names for each vacancy. The number of positions would be determined by the volume of soybeans produced by the state or unit.

Designated by the act as The United Soybean Board, the approximately 60-member body will sponsor projects to improve the position of soybeans in the marketplace. The act specifies that the board's operations be funded by a mandatory assessment of soybean producers of 1/2 of one percent of the net market price per bushel of all soybeans marketed in the United States. (The net market price is the sale price plus any premiums added to it or discounts subtracted from it based on grading or other quality factors.)

Notice of the proposal to establish the procedures is in today's Federal Register. Comments should be sent in duplicate, by Mar. 12 to Ralph L. Tapp, chief, Marketing Programs Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2624-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

Copies of the notice and additional information on the soybean program, as well as copies of the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act, are available from that office—telephone (202) 382-1115.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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USDA PROPOSES USER FEES FOR INSPECTING PASSENGER BAGGAGE AND COMMERCIAL CARGO

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to levy a series of user fees to cover the cost of inspecting baggage, cargo and vehicles for products that could carry plant pests and animal diseases into the United States.

The target date for instituting the new fees is April 1. The fee would be $2 for airline passengers arriving from foreign countries or traveling to the U.S. mainland from Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; $2 for a commercial truck crossing from Mexico; $7 for a loaded railroad car crossing from Mexico; and $544 for a commercial vessel of 100 net tons or more entering a U.S. port.

"The principle of collecting user fees for agricultural inspections has already been established," said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "The 1990 budget legislation requires us to make these charges to cover our expenses. We're publishing a proposal to implement this law in the simplest, most practical and most equitable way possible."

Alternatively, trucking and railroad companies could pay a yearly fee to cover their border-crossing operations. No charge is proposed for traffic from Canada because APHIS relies on U.S. Customs to enforce the few quarantines that apply to Canada.

User fees would be collected for APHIS by the U.S. Customs Service, airline ticket agents and transportation companies. APHIS would follow methods of collecting, remitting and auditing user fees developed by the U.S. Customs Service, which has been charging similar user fees since 1986. The money would be sent to the U.S. Treasury, which would then give the money to APHIS to cover appropriations approved by the Congress.

Glosser said the 1990 budget legislation also authorizes APHIS to collect fees from airline companies to inspect planes arriving in the United States; from exporters to issue export certificates for plant and animal products; and from users of veterinary diagnostic services. No mechanism currently exists to collect these fees. Glosser said he would propose such a mechanism in future rulemaking.

Inspections are needed to intercept plant pests and animal diseases that are not present in the United States. Failure to stop items covered by an agricultural quarantine can lead to a costly infestation, such as the recent Mediterranean fruit-fly outbreak in California. More than $65 million was spent to eradicate the insect from that state.

The major risk is from travelers who bring agricultural souvenirs from trips overseas. They are asked to list any agricultural items they bring back on their Customs declaration. Undeclared items intercepted by APHIS inspectors can lead to fines ranging from $50 to $100.

Notice of the proposal is being published in the Feb. 27 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted if they are received on or before March 14. An original and three copies of written comments referring to Docket 90-247 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development; PPD, APHIS, USDA; Room 866 Federal Building; 6505 Belcrest Road; Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected as soon as received at USDA, Room 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Doug Hendricks (301) 436-7799

#

CHANGES IN UNIFORM GRAIN STORAGE AGREEMENT CONTRACTS FOR 1991-1992

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today announced that contract renewal forms for the Uniform Grain Storage Agreement will be mailed to warehousemen by March 1. These forms, including Amendment 3 to the UGSA, contain new requirements for the 1991-92 contract year and will become effective June 1.

The contracts require that the class, grade and quality of all grain to which the UGSA is applicable be determined in accordance with the "Official United States Standards for Grain."

When authorized evaluation procedures have been developed, approved and published by USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service they must be followed by warehousemen whenever grain quality determinations are being made under the terms of the UGSA. This includes grain deposited for CCC's account, and grain pledged as collateral for CCC price support loans. Until the FGIS procedures are published, warehousemen should develop procedures that will reasonably determine the grade and quality of the grain, including protein for hard wheat. These procedures will not replace inspection procedures used for making "official" grade and quality determinations when required or requested.

The terminal warehouseman is also required to take split samples of the grain and provide one sample to the producer.

The following are other UGSA contract revisions:

—If a warehouseman is unwilling or unable to load out grain in accordance with CCC issued loading orders, CCC, or its contractor, will be permitted to enter the warehouse and remove grain equal to the kind, quality and quantity indicated on the CCC loading order and submitted warehouse receipts. Any cost incurred by CCC in recovering the grain will be for the account of the warehouseman. The warehouseman will be required to pay CCC all costs which it may incur including, but not limited to, attorney fees and court costs due to the warehouseman's failure to deliver grain.

—The warehouseman must show CCC as a co-payee or as an additional interest on the insurance policy if CCC-owned grain is required to be insured.

—The storage stop date will not be before 12 days after the date of the loading order. In addition, CCC will no longer limit additional storage charges to 50 percent of the approved rate if shipments are made past the storage stop date. CCC may extend the storage stop date when it determines the delay in shipment was due to circumstances beyond the control of the warehouseman. All extensions of the storage stop date, including those with temporary verbal approval, must be justified by the warehouseman in writing. The justification must be approved by CCC in writing before final payment is made by CCC.

—The deputy administrator, Commodity Operations, of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, will become the

Contracting Officer for the purpose of considering a warehouseman's appeal of the Contracting Officer's determination which either proposes to terminate the agreement or which removes the warehouse from CCC's list of approved warehouses. Time periods for such review are specified.

—Definitions have been added explaining approved space, Official United States Standards for Grain, business days, Authorized Grain Evaluation Procedures, and Form KC-228. Form KC-228 is a form issued by a warehouseman to CCC in lieu of or in addition to a warehouse receipt. The KC-228 is a document of title which establishes the ownership interest of CCC in grain stored in the warehouse.

—Offers are due from warehousemen by March 29. Acceptance will be announced by USDA April 30. Warehousemen should submit offers to the Kansas City Commodity Office, P.O. Box 419205, Kansas City, Mo. 64141-6205.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

#

USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON DISCRETIONARY PROVISIONS OF 1990 FARM BILL

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today asked for comments on several provisions which may be implemented for the 1991-1995 crops of wheat, feed grains, rice, upland cotton and extra long staple cotton.

Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of the CCC, said comments are sought on:

—Whether targeted option payments should be made available for wheat, feed grains, upland cotton and rice;

—whether acreage designated as acreage conservation reserve for wheat, feed grains, upland cotton and rice may be planted to oilseeds, industrial or experimental crops, oats or any other crop;

—whether double-cropping on conserving use acreage under the 0/92 and 50/92 program provisions should be permitted;

—whether malting barley should be exempted from acreage reduction requirements;

—whether loans and purchases should be made available to program participants who cut corn for silage, and

—whether a paid land diversion program should be made available for

the crops of wheat, feed grains, upland and ELS cotton and rice.

CCC is proposing that none of the foregoing provisions be implemented for the 1991 crops. CCC is also proposing that double-cropping on conserving use acreage under the 0/92 and 50/92 provisions, malting barley exemptions, corn silage loans and paid land diversions not be implemented for the 1992-1995 crops.

A paid land diversion program for upland cotton must be determined annually, and CCC is proposing only that it not be implemented for the 1991 crop. CCC will also consider comments on whether targeted option payments should be made available and planting crops on ACR should be permitted for 1992 and subsequent crops.

Comments are also requested on which counties should be designated as suitable for the production of ELS cotton for purposes of the ELS price support and production adjustment program. CCC intends to designate the same counties eligible for ELS program benefits as in 1990 and additional counties may be designated upon request.

Comments on the foregoing provisions should include the following, when applicable:

—Justification for implementation;

—impact on farm income and CCC outlays;

—production practices, costs and market prices.

Additional information is available in the Feb 28 Federal Register.

Comments must be received by March 13 by the Director, Commodity Analysis Division, USDA/ASCS, Room 3741-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013. All comments will be available for public inspection in Room 3741-S of the USDA's South Building during regular business hours.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

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MEATS AND ALTERNATES—USDA HELPS FIND THE BEST BUYS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27—Turkey, ground beef, whole chicken, ground chuck, and pork shoulder were found to be the best meat buys in a recent study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The economy of a cut depends on the amount of cooked lean meat or the number of servings it provides, as well as its price per pound, according to Sue Ann Ritchko, administrator of USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service.

"Relatively high-priced meat cuts with little or no waste may be more economical than low-priced cuts with a great deal of bone, gristle, or fat," Ritchko said.

Costs in this study, which included meat alternates as well as selected types and cuts of meat, poultry, and fish, were estimated using nationwide prices collected in December 1990 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The study also compared the costs of 20 grams of protein—about one-third of the recommended allowance for a man—from selected meats and alternates. Some meat alternates—such as peanut butter and eggs—are as good or better buys than less expensive cuts of meat. However, some processed meat products, such as frankfurters and bologna, were found to cost more as sources of protein than some beef roasts and steaks.

Ritchko also said that while a 3-ounce serving of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish provides 20 grams of protein or more, the amount of some alternates and meat products required to provide the 20 grams of protein is far more than the amount people normally eat in a day.

For example, it takes 5 tablespoons of peanut butter, four frankfurters, or 10 slices of bacon to provide 20 grams of protein.

Ritchko said consumers can use the following tables to obtain comparable costs for meats and alternates in their supermarkets by multiplying the part of the market unit figure by the local price per unit.

ESTIMATED COST OF MEATS AND ALTERNATES

Cost of 3 ounces of cooked lean from specified meat and poultry using nationwide prices collected in December 1990:

Food	Retail price per pound* (dollars)	Part of pound for 3 ounces of cooked lean	Cost of 3 ounces of cooked lean (dollars)
Turkey, ready-to-cook	0.96	0.41	0.39
Ground beef, regular	1.63	0.29	0.47
Chicken, whole, ready-to-cook	0.86	0.55	0.47
Ground chuck	2.02	0.28	0.57
Pork shoulder, smoked, bone in	1.41	0.46	0.65
Chicken breasts, bone in	2.00	0.40	0.80
Round roast of beef, bone out	3.02	0.27	0.82
Chuck roast of beef, bone in	2.15	0.44	0.95
Round beefsteak, bone out	3.42	0.33	1.13
Sirloin beefsteak, bone in	3.65	0.31	1.13
Pork chops, center cut, bone in	3.32	0.42	1.39
Rib roast of beef, bone in	4.54	0.41	1.86
T-bone beefsteak, bone in	5.45	0.42	2.29

Cost of 20 grams of protein from specified meats and meat alternates at December 1990 prices:

Food	Market unit	Price per market unit* (dollars)	Part of market unit to give 20 grams of protein**	Cost of 20 grams of protein (dollars)
Eggs, large	doz	1.00	0.28	0.28
Turkey, ready-to-cook	lb	0.96	0.33	0.32
Bread, white, enriched***	lb	0.70	0.50	0.35
Tuna, canned	6.5 oz	0.87	0.41	0.36
Chicken, whole, ready-to-cook	lb	0.86	0.42	0.36
Peanut butter	18 oz	2.31	0.16	0.37
Ground beef, regular	lb	1.63	0.27	0.40
Milk, whole, fluid****	1/2 gal	1.39	0.31	0.43

Pork shoulder, smoked, bone in	lb	1.41	0.32	0.45
Ground chuck	lb	2.02	0.25	0.51
Chicken breasts, bone in	lb	2.00	0.27	0.54
Chuck roast of beef, bone in	lb	2.15	0.29	0.62
Round roast of beef, bone out	lb	3.02	0.22	0.66
Round beefsteak, bone out	lb	3.42	0.20	0.68
Sirloin beefsteak, bone in	lb	3.65	0.23	0.84
Frankfurters, all meat	lb	2.40	0.39	0.94
Bologna	lb	2.60	0.38	0.99
Pork chops, center cut, bone in	lb	3.32	0.32	1.06
Pork sausage, bulk	lb	2.42	0.47	1.14
Bacon, sliced	lb	2.28	0.52	1.19
Rib roast of beef, bone in	lb	4.54	0.30	1.36
T-bone beefsteak, bone in	lb	5.45	0.32	1.74

* U.S. average retail price of food item estimated using information provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

** About one-third of the daily amount recommended for a 20-year-old man. Assumes that all meat is eaten.

*** Bread and other grain products, such as pasta and rice, frequently are used with a small amount of meat, poultry, fish, or cheese as main dishes in economy meals. In this way, the high-quality protein in meat and cheese enhances the lower quality of protein in cereal products.

**** Although milk is not used to replace meat in meals, it is an economical source of good-quality protein. Nationwide prices for cheese were not available.

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USDA SEEKS PROPOSALS ON AMEMDMENTS TO POTATO RESEARCH AND PROMOTION ACT

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking proposals to implement 1990 Farm Bill amendments affecting the National Potato Research and Promotion Act.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the Farm Bill amendments authorize:

—assessing imported potatoes at the same rate as those produced domestically;

—eliminating the assessment refund provision in the program's current rules and regulations;

—including Alaska and Hawaii in the program so that it involves all 50 states;

—permitting up to five importers membership on the program's 95-member board; and

—changing the requirement for passage of a referendum to a simple majority of those voting rather than two-thirds of those voting.

To become effective, amendments must become part of the act's set of implementing regulations, the National Potato Research and Promotion Plan. USDA welcomes proposals from the potato industry and the public on how to make the plan reflect these amendments to the act.

Notice of the request for proposals to change the plan will appear in the Feb. 28 Federal Register. Comments, postmarked no later than April 1, should be sent to the Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, rm. 2525, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

Copies of the notice and additional information are obtainable from Arthur Pease at that address; tel. (202) 475-3915.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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